

SHELBY LOGSDON: A SUCCESS STORY



Shelby Logsdon has proved that disabilities can be managed in ways that will lead one to success! Shelby is a success story herself and was quick to learn about her rights as a student with a disability. As an adult, she has learned to be assertive in a positive way to ensure her personal achievement in school and in life. She makes the extra effort to find out what services and resources are available to her and she utilizes her resources, including those formed under partnership with the Hopewell Valley Regional School District and Alternatives, Inc.

Alternatives, Inc. is a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting individuals with special needs reach their highest level of independence and integration into the community. Alternatives, Inc. provides comprehensive support services to individuals and families with special needs as it works with Mercer County program partners, side by side with mentors, school officials, employers and parents to ensure that each student receives the highest quality of service throughout their high school career.

Alternatives, Inc. has a person-centered philosophy that is dedicated to providing each person served the support they need to assist them in achieving their goals. What's more, Alternatives enables people to reach further to attain their dreams and aspirations. A statewide New Jersey organization, Alternatives values diversity and believes that the continued success of the agency will be dependent upon being culturally competent. The agency has exemplified great Mercer County efforts in the area of advocacy, service and inclusion on behalf of people with disabilities, including Shelby Logsdon. Alternatives offers a wide variety of supports and services designed to address the needs of people with a range of cognitive, physical and emotional disabilities, as well as people who are homeless and others with special needs:

- People With Developmental Disabilities
- Mental Health Consumers
- Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Students With Disabilities
- Homeless Individuals & Families

Bridges to Employment, a subsidiary of Alternatives, Inc. housed in the agency, helps people with a broad spectrum of skills and abilities find successful employment. The program provides pre-employment evaluation, preparation and job matching services. After a job match is made, Alternatives' Career Facilitators provide

ongoing support to both the client and the employer to ensure success and satisfaction. The program also offers education to employers to increase their understanding of hiring people with disabilities. Alternatives also provides transition services for high school students through Bridges to Employment. This service provides students and their parents with information and guidance when making the transition from high school to adult life. Transition services offer a variety of options to meet the individualized needs of the school and its students. Classes on how to get and keep a job are offered for individuals like Shelby and small groups. Bridges Transition Services are also available to conduct assessments that help to determine the vocational needs of the student. Once those needs are determined, the Bridges team provides one-on-one career exploration, structured learning experiences, job placement, intensive job coaching and job training just as it did for Shelby.

Bridges to Employment is pleased to highlight Shelby Logsdon, one of its transitions students, as a success story! Shelby has just graduated from Hopewell Valley Central High School and has been a shining star. She has had exemplary performance in her roles as a food services assistant and farmhand via the jobs BTE staff members worked with her and the school district to cultivate for her. The staff worked to ensure that Shelby did not just have a job, but a position that matched her skills and abilities to what the employers were looking for. Shelby is an avid video gamer and animal lover and she works extremely hard to be the best despite her disability. She is a walking encyclopedia and she keeps people engaged with unique little known facts such as hermit crab trivia! Her natural supports on the job sing her praises and BTE staff members have seen Shelby grow and become more independent and self-sufficient. She has a great sense of humor and has developed interpersonal skills and put many elements from the BTE curriculum lessons she participated in to use to help her self-advocate.

Shelby enjoys her church youth group programs and has become more social, less anxious and her self-esteem has grown tremendously. Born with a rare chromosomal disorder, Shelby has exceeded expectations and proved she is an equitable part of society and not diminished by limitations. She turns her weaknesses into strengths and in many areas she has been able to be a role model. Shelby even serves as a trainer on her jobs and shows new hires the ropes! For recent high school graduates, making the transition from high school to adult life is a very challenging period. This transition becomes even more challenging when the student has a disability. Bridges to Employment is proud to have served Shelby as a student in the Hopewell School District and looks forward to working with her as she transitions to the Department of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services. Shelby is a nurturing superstar and BTE is pleased to also have been able to work with her to secure a corporate part-time food services role at Sodexo Bristol-Myers Squibb beginning right after she celebrates her high school graduation! Sodexo services improve the quality of life for 75 million people in businesses, hospitals, schools and remote sites around the world. The fact that they are the leader in most of these markets is not by chance. It is a result of the talent, skills and commitment of their employees, like Shelby Logsdon, their most important resource.

Words from Shelby: "At Mercer High School, I was selected to be a student worker in Chuck's Place, a Wawa-based store within the high school. When my senior year was over there, I transferred to my home school district where I volunteered at the YMCA, Sodexo, the school board office and my local school's media center. I eventually was able to be a client of Bridges to Employment. They got me a job at Sodexo in my school's cafeteria and I am also being considered for a role with Pompotian Food Services in the fall, but right now I am being paid as a Sodexo substitute food services assistant and utilities worker and I am so happy! The BTE agency also got me a job at Bluestone Farms, LLC and I help tend to horses as a part-time animal ranch hand. It also gets even better because I just got offered a job at Bristol-Myers Squibb, a major pharmaceutical company, in their wildlife environmental location in Princeton, that will allow me to grow in the food services industry and transfer those skills when my family moves to North Carolina next year. Thank you Bridges to Employment!"